T-12

Ted Kaczynski
Stemple Pass Rd.
Lincoln, Montana 59639
CANYON CREEK, MT
DEC 10 AM 1983
59633
Tennessee Valley Authority
USA 20c
Dave Kaczynski
Terlingua Route, Box 220
Alpine, Texas 79830
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to decongest and drain—
no drying
no drowsiness

①

Dear Dave:

I dug up 2 or 3 of your letters which I had saved because I hadn't got around to making some comments that I meant to make on parts of them.

You mentioned that when you dug your hole you made the sides slope outward to reduce the risk of a cave-in. I quote Herodotus, Book Seven, Chapt. 23: (Referring to a great canal commanded to be dug by Xerxes the Persian)

"I will now describe how the canal was cut. The

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In describing your feelings about digging the hole, you made a parenthetical remark that, apparently, referred to the discarded idea of building a cabin: "on the off-chance I should be successful". I don't have the slightest doubt you could build a good cabin — if you once started the project. That's the only problem. You would be apt to be so pessimistic about the results beforehand that you ~~woul~~ would never undertake the project.

You remark that while

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ideas are transformed as absurd empirical assertions, while losing their poetic life and suggestiveness."

I like this passage so well that I have copied it in my notebook. So there you stand amongst all kinds of famous ~~~~ writers whome I have quoted from time to time in my notes.

—Ted

P.S. Merry Christmas.

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ground was divided into (2)
sections for the men of the various nations....

All the nations except the Phoenicians had their work doubled by the sides falling in, as they naturally would, since they made the cutting ~~as wide~~ the same width at the top as it was intended to be at the bottom. But the Phoenicians, in this as in Xerxes' other works, gave a signal example of their skill. They, in the section allotted to them, took out a trench double the width prescribed for the actual finished canal and by digging at a slope narrowed it as they got further down, until at the bottom their section was the same width as the rest."

I will hereafter apply to you the surname of "The Phoenician".

you like being alone 5 (4)
days a week, you would welcome suitable companionship during the other 2. But I wonder if, eventually, after getting accustomed to it, you might not consider total solitude preferable. My own experience was that the longer I lived alone, the better I liked solitude.

I especially liked the following passage from a recent letter of yours: "... the [molimo] ritual demanded something like an attitude of 'pretend' that was aware of itself as such. I think of modern religions as tending to become confused in this area, so that the alternative to the empirical interpretation of reality, in drawing near to the empirical, is only usurped by it, so that the religious

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